

Department of Veterans Affairs
Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital
800 Hospital Drive
Columbia, MO 65201

HPM 589A4-64
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Issued by: Research

FOREIGN TRAVEL REVIEW PROCESS

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish a formal review process for considering all foreign travel requests from Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) personnel while in official duty status.

2. **BACKGROUND:** Many important international meetings and educational opportunities occur annually throughout the world. VA physicians, scientists, and other staff members are in demand as participants in these activities, and many find it worthwhile and important to attend, present their own work, learn new advances, or acquire new skills. Similarly, VA staff may be requested to participate in administrative, technical, or other onsite reviews. When the reputation and effectiveness of the VA is enhanced by such involvement, participation is considered desirable.

3. **POLICY:**

a. An official Government passport and special travel authorization are required for VA employees traveling on official Government business to foreign countries, including Canada and Mexico; foreign travel encompasses locations other than U.S. Territories and possessions, and Puerto Rico. This applies to any VA employee traveling on authorized absence regardless of the funding source. This has been implemented for the protection of VA employees traveling on official Government business. For trips that combine official and personal travel, the traveler must have both an official Government passport and a personal passport. Also note that some foreign countries will require an entry visa. Employee government passport requests must arrive at VA Central Office, Travel Policy Division, at least 45 days prior to travel.

b. The Hospital Director is authorized to review, and approve or disapprove, foreign travel for staff at this facility when:

(1) The request is only for authorized absences to visit a foreign country and the traveler will not utilize any VA appropriated funds (travel, per diem, registration, or fees) for any portion of the trip.

(2) The request is for General Post Funds (GPF) to visit a foreign country when the employee has been invited to present a paper at an international conference.

(3) The traveler's cumulative foreign travel for a calendar year does not exceed absences of 20 calendar days away from the facility or three trips, including the trip for which the request is made. The 20 days away from the facility includes travel time, holidays and weekends occurring within the approved period and is not pro-rated because of a full or part-time VA appointment.

c. The Under Secretary for Health retains approval/disapproval authority for:

- (1) Any request involving foreign travel of a facility Director.
- (2) Requests involving VA appropriated funds, including travel, per diem, and/or registration fees.
- (3) Requests for foreign travel when an individual's cumulative foreign travel will exceed 20 calendar days away from the facility.
- (4) Requests where travel exceeds three trips in the calendar year, including the trip for which the request is made.

4. RESPONSIBILITY:

- a. Hospital Director is responsible for approval/disapproval of all foreign travel requests forwarded by the Research and Development (R&D) Committee, whether local final approval is authorized, or approval is required by the Under Secretary for Health.
- b. The R&D Committee is responsible for reviewing all requests for foreign travel according to M-8, Part V, Chapter 3, Paragraph 3.06, and recommending approval or disapproval to the Hospital Director.
- c. Associate Chief of Staff for Research & Development (ACOS/R&D) is responsible for initial review of requests for foreign travel and recommending approval or disapproval to the R&D Committee.

5. PROCEDURE:

- a. For locally approved travel: VA Staff members requesting foreign travel approval should submit a "Foreign Travel Briefing Slip" (Attachment 1) to their respective service chief for timely review and signature. The service chief should, after review, forward the Briefing Slip and supporting documents to the Research and Development Committee, Research Office, no later than 60 calendar days prior to the proposed travel date.
- b. For travel requiring Under Secretary for Health approval: A request, with justifications, must be submitted through the appropriate local channels to the Office of Academic Affiliations (144) with a recommendation for approval/disapproval by the individual's supervisor, R&D Committee, and facility Director, 60 days prior to departure.

6. APPEALS:

- a. Foreign travel requests disapproved by the Hospital Director under paragraph 3(a) may be appealed, upon resubmission to the Hospital Director, through the Chief of Staff, with additional pertinent information provided.
- b. Appeals of the Under Secretary for Health's decisions may be directed in writing through the Hospital Director to the office of Academic Affiliations (14) with any administrative or technical explanation/justification not included in the original request.

Travel requests disapproved by the Hospital Director may not be appealed to the Office of Academic Affiliations.

7. **REPORTS:** A report of all foreign travel actions during each quarter of the fiscal year will be submitted to the Office of Academic Affiliations no later than the 10th working day following the close of each quarter. The report should be submitted by the R&D Committee through the Hospital Director.

8. **REFERENCES:** M-8, Part V, Chapter 3

9. **RECISIONS:** HPM 589A-64, dated June 23, 2004.

APPROVED:



SALLIE HOUSER-HANFELDER, FACHE
Director

Key Words:

Research
Foreign
Travel

FOREIGN TRAVEL BRIEFING SLIP		VA Form 10-5504	
1. <u>Name of Medical Center</u>		2. <u>Date of Request</u>	
3. <u>Name of Requestor and VA Title</u>		4. Full-time Equivalent	
5. <u>Name of Meeting:</u> <u>Date of Meeting</u> (<i>excluding travel time</i>): <u>Location:</u> <u>Purpose and Benefits to VA:</u>			
6. <u>VA Support Requested</u> Dates of trip (<i>leave/return</i>): Total number of days (<i>excluding AL</i>): Registration: Transportation: Lodging: Meals: Total Estimate:			
7. <u>Source of VA Support</u> (<i>GPF, VA-appropriated travel funds</i>)			
8. <u>Support other than VA</u> (<i>attach completed VA Form 10-0101B</i>) If no external support is being requested, indicate NONE in this block.			
9. <u>Trip Itinerary</u> (<i>complete on second page of this form.</i>)			
10. <u>Previous Official Foreign Travel during prior 2 years</u> (<i>complete on second page of this form</i>)			
11. <u>Recommendation of Hospital Education Committee:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Approve: ____ <i>Official Travel Status:</i> ____ <i>Days</i> ____ <i>Use of GPF</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Disapprove: ____ <i>Insufficient Justification</i> ____ <i>Missing Information</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Forward to Under Secretary for Health: ____ <i>Exceeds 20 days/3 trips</i> ____ <i>Use of VA appropriated funds</i> ____ <i>Other:</i>			
12. <u>Education Committee Chairperson</u>		13. <u>Date</u>	

[illegible]